

## REMARKS

The Examiner has objected to claim 31. In response, claim 31 has been canceled.

The Examiner rejected claims 5, 8, 11 – 13, 20, 23, 26, and 30 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In response to the rejections, the claims have been amended and are now believed to comply with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Thus, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the §112 rejections.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 - 31 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by MACNAUGHTON. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Independent claims 1, 15, 16, and 30 have been amended to clarify that the membership information includes information entered into and sent from each terminal and also that the retrieval condition is compared against the entered information. In contrast, MACNAUGHTON shows determining whether another user is online. However, the reference does not determine whether another user matches a description specified by the retrieval condition, such as a character string.

As shown in Fig. 4, exemplary membership information entered into and sent from each of the terminals includes “RPG, Experiencing the adventure now” for users AKIKO and TADASHI, “Let’s pair up in RPG” for NAOKO, and “Items of RPG for sale” for user JUNKO. A retrieval condition of “RPG” would result in a screen display, as shown by Fig. 5. That is, each user having the term “RPG” in their profile would have their membership information extracted and sent.

In contrast, MACNAUGHTON only analyzes whether a user is online, and does not search membership information, such as a description of what level in a game the character is participating in. Although MACNAUGHTON provides for the entry of information, such as text, MACNAUGHTON does not provide for searching such information. Thus, for at least these reasons, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the §102 rejections and provide an indication of the allowability of the claims 1, 15, 16, and 30.

Claims 14 and 29 recite additional features, such as creating a second list from a first list and sending messages to members in the second list. The Examiner does not address the

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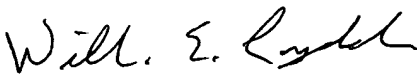
limitations of these claims in the rejection. Nor does the applied reference teach or suggest such limitations. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of claims 14 and 29.

Dependent claims 2 - 13 and 17 - 28 are also believed to recite further patentable subject matter of the invention and therefore are also believed allowable over the prior art. As such, allowance of the dependent claims is deemed proper for at least the same reasons noted for the independent claims, in addition to reasons related to their own recitations. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all of the claims in the present application.

Any amendments to the claims that have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should there be any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below listed number.

Respectfully submitted,  
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